

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, February 27, 2014; 5:00 p.m.**

Hartford Towers High-Rise

335 Hartford Avenue

Providence, RI 02909

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Nicolas Retsinas
Thomas Ryan
Roger Giraud
John Igliozi
Nicholas Narducci
Hilary Silver
JT Taylor

Absent:

Dolores Cascella
Kevin Jackson
Ricardo Patino
Dorothy Waters

Initially four members were present, sufficient to commence an informational meeting. Commissioner Narducci arrived at 5:09 pm, Commissioner Igliozi arrived at 5:17 pm, and Commissioner Silver arrived at 5:24 pm bringing the attendance to seven constituting a quorum to conduct business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

When the Chairman recognized seven members were present, he asked for a motion on the minutes which were made by Commissioner Narducci, seconded by Vice Chairman Ryan to accept and approve the regular meeting minutes of 1/23/14. The minutes were approved with a unanimous voice vote.

RESIDENT'S COMMENTS

None

Chairman's Report

Chairman Retsinas noted the board meeting in March would be focusing on CNI and to meet the private development partner. He encouraged everyone to attend.

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Tavares stated that at the March Board of Commissioners meeting, Trinity Financial will be the sole presenter that evening. In addition, the MOU should be ready for approval at the next meeting.

Secondly, PHA is undergoing reorganization. The purpose is to focus attention to the delivery of service to our tenants and developments. Property Management has been taken out of the Asset Management department and combined with the Tenant Selection department. Michelle Rocchio, Director of Tenant Selection will now be Director of combined departments. Also, Terri Green, has been appointed Acting Assistant Director. There will be a 'team approach' with Property Management, Facilities Management, Resident Services and Special Projects who will involve the Resident Advisory Board's (RAB) perspective of how to best deliver services to our residents at the developments since they each have their own unique differences and needs. Having a focused management team will bring everyone on the same page and we can serve our tenants in a more productive manner.

Finally, Director Tavares distributed a list of our top 30 vendors along with a pie chart to show where the PHA's funds are spent as follows: \$4 million on various employee benefits, BlueCross and pension benefits ; Utilities at just under \$4 million; Narragansett Bay Commission and Providence Water Supply Board \$2 million; Contract for energy improvements \$1.1 million (being paid out of savings in energy from the energy conservation improvements); Insurance \$1 million; Maintenance improvements approximately \$800,000; Waste disposal \$225,000; Audit \$114,000; Leasing of equipment \$214,000 and Employer's Tax \$106,000. Collectively we spend approximately \$14 million for our top 30 vendors.

Director Tavares feels that this is a worthwhile yearly exercise in order to focus on our top expenses. Chairman Retsinas commented that it is also a useful tool to maintain transparency.

Commissioner Narducci questioned the Bank of America Leasing (BOA). The Director stated that firms come in and identify areas of cost savings for structural or equipment for energy conservation. Several years ago the PHA made over \$1 million of improvements. The PHA borrowed money through BOA Leasing and are paying the debt services of that loan with the savings from the utility energy savings they are accruing. The Director will furnish a list of the improvements to the board.

Allan Pacific, of Facilities Management commented that a report showed there was a net savings of over \$200,000. A report will also be provided to the commissioners.

Chairman Retsinas congratulated Michelle Rocchio on her newly appointed position and asked her about her history at the PHA. Michelle gave a brief history of her employment at the PHA since 1988, and her eagerness to start her new position.

Commissioner Igliozi questioned the quorum. The Director explained that Providence has a unique ordinance that creates the PHA, requiring seven members for a quorum. It would require a change of the Home Rule Charter to change the quorum to bring it to six members.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Budget and Finance: (Comm. Giraud)
- Resident Services: (Comm. Silver)
- Capital Improvements: (Comm. Cascella)
- Executive Committee: (Chair Retsinas)

Budget & Finance: Commissioner Giraud commented that the FY2014 numbers are still favorable with respect to income versus expenses considering the extraordinary expenses incurred during the freezing weather. The RFP for audit services has been sent out and we have received ten responses. An internal committee is reviewing the proposals, Commissioner Giraud will select three finalists, and the finance committee will meet to coordinate how to handle the recommendations. He also mentioned that the 2013 Audit will be available shortly.

Resident Services: Melissa Sanzaro, Director of Special Projects read the report. PHA received HUD funding for the 2014 Public Housing FFS Program for \$69,000; applied for United Way's Olneyville Community Fund for \$15,000 for the computer program at Manton along with an application for \$15,000 from United Health Community Fund to establish a computer program at Dexter Manor. All fire safety devices continue to be installed in all high-rise units.

Commissioner Narducci questioned the recycle program at PHA. Melissa Sanzaro explained, a few years ago PHA received an EPA Justice Grant for \$30,000 to implement a resident-based recycling program in the high-rises. At the end of the grant contract, there were no savings with the City for waste pickup and PHA could not prove a sufficient savings to the EPA, therefore, denying us a follow-up grant. Director Tavares stated a solution needs to be worked out with Resource Recovery of getting the recyclables to them and reducing our tipping fees. Commissioner Narducci asked the Director to reach out to the Pawtucket Housing Authority for input on how their recycling program works.

Capital Improvements: Allan Pacific stated, a bid package is going out to replace and relocate transformers at Chad which is approximately a cost of \$400,000. A hot water heat exchange was installed by PHA crew at Manton. The authority saved approximately \$30,000 doing the job in house and recycling the heat exchange.

RESOLUTIONS:

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

In keeping with the monthly presentations, Chairman Retsinas introduced Melissa Sanzaro, Director of Special Projects. Melissa presented a slide show with an overview of her department's functions and responsibilities. One point Melissa wanted to express is the importance of the Resident Advisory Board. In FY2013 the PHA RAB committee won a National Award for RAB of The Year. They were recognized by Dr. Samuel Little, CEO of NAR-SAAH (National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing).

Commissioner Silver wanted to thank and recognize the great job that Melissa and her team do in special projects with some of the undertakings that they take on.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Retsinas accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Narducci, seconded by Commissioner Ryan. Said motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Lisa Cancelliere
Recording Secretary

Paul Tavares
Interim Executive Director